



Grace Notes

The Newsletter of First Congregational Church

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The Pastoral Perspective

I'm writing this in the midst of a glorious stretch of weather: sunny, pleasant days are followed by cool, refreshing nights. I love periods like this, and I wish they would go on forever. Of course, as much as my heart is set on this desire, I know that is not to be. The pleasantly cool weather will become downright cold; rain, followed by sleet and snow, will move in, the days will grow shorter. Soon, autumn will be here, to be followed by winter. But then the cycle will continue, and we eventually will be back where we are at the present moment.

Is this good? Bad? As Christians, we inhabit a cyclical liturgical calendar, each year repeating and reliving the central events of our faith. Unlike some other religious traditions, however, we don't believe that time is cyclical. Instead, we see it as being very much linear, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Right now, we're somewhere in the middle. Where, I cannot say—but that is one of the wonders of reality. We can measure time in infinitesimally small units, but there is so much about time that remains a mystery to us, including, of course, the future.

A traditional reading of our faith tells us that at some point to come, Jesus shall return. When he will do this we do not know. We are called, however, to live as if he might come back any moment. At the same time, we need to plan for his return to be in the distant future. We can't wait for Jesus to right every wrong in the world. True, we can't fix everything, but that doesn't mean we can't fix anything. We as a people are called to have faith—in God, in our ability to make a difference.

We know this. As much as we might be frustrated with the way things are, we know they can be better. We are a people grounded in hope.

Think about that. Think about what we read in Scripture.

The hope of Abraham, starting out in a new land.

The hope of Israel, as it persisted in the face of enemies and exile.

The hope of Mary, unmarried and about to be a mother.

The hope of, and in, Jesus.

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SUNDAY SERVICE



SEPTEMBER 15 KICK-OFF SUNDAY!

The Blessing of the Backpacks!
Bring yours to worship!

Church School Registration!
Age 4–Grade 1, Grades 2-4, Grades 5-6

Lunch and Outdoor Fun!
Pizza, Salad, Games, and Other Stuff

This Year in Church School—Finding Christ in Our Lives

If we believe in God and follow what he asks of us, we ask a special part of Jesus to live inside us. This isn't New-Age spirituality but something we are taught in the New Testament (see, for example, 2 Peter 1:3-8).

Being a Christian isn't as simple as being nice to others and doing the right thing, although we should certainly do those things. There's so much more!

To help us grow in our faith this year, we will direct our learning toward committing our lives to knowing God through the teachings of the New Testament. Who are the leading figures in the Christian story, and what characteristics and attitudes did they demonstrate to honor God? We'll explore these questions in Church School, and we'll be asking you, the congregation, to be partners on our journey!

*Join us for another great year of Church School, making new friendships and renewing old ones.
And we gratefully recognize Nancy Parsons as our new Superintendent—thanks, Nan!*

Do Your Part to Fill the Cart!

Greater Lebanon is struggling with rising poverty and food insecurity, especially among children. To address this need, we now collect contributions year-round in a shopping cart in the Parish Hall, with a different beneficiary designated monthly.

During the month of September, we will collect non-perishable food and personal-care items for

LISTEN COMMUNITY SERVICES

Thanks for your generosity in fighting poverty and hunger in our community.

Queued for Coffee Hour

September—Diaconate
October—Mission and Social Action
November—Women of the Church

Community Dinner

Sunday, September 22, 5:00 pm

Leaders: AMY DRISCOLL AND LESLIE THOMSON

Many thanks to Amy and Leslie for organizing this month's dinner! Please lend them a hand as needed, as we provide this vital service to our neighbors.

Sign-ups to be posted in the Parish Hall.

STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH

Special UCC Offering—September 8

The Strengthen the Church program supports the growth of ministry and local congregations across the country. Renewing older spiritual communities, building new ones, and funding fellowships for young, emerging leaders in our church, the program is vital to the health of our denomination.

Please contribute as you are able. Thanks!

SEPTEMBER 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10a Worship (Communion)	2 LABOR DAY (FCC office closed)	3 7p Diaconate 7p BSA Troop 279	4 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN	5 7p Choir (resumes weekly) 7p Valley Improv	6	7 1-3p Wings of Hope, Colburn Park (FCC if rain)
8 10a Worship 11:15a MSA 4p Juneberry Music Nostalgia Sing and Potluck	9 4p UVMC Suzuki Parent Night 5:30p Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	10 7p BSA Troop 279	11 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers (resumes weekly)	12 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	13	14 7p Acacia Chamber Music
15 KICK-OFF SUNDAY! 10a Worship and Church School	16 5:30p Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	17 7p Church Council 7p BSA Troop 279/Committee	18 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	19 12:30p Grafton-Orange-Sullivan Assn (CoCM) 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	20 9a Sundance Singers Retreat at Horton Center (evening arrival)	21 Horton Retreat (continues)
22 Horton Retreat (concludes) 10a Worship and Church School 11:15a Bd of Govs 5p Community Dinner	23 5:30p Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	24 6:30p Sustainable Lebanon 7p BSA Troop 279	25 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	26 10a-6p NH-WIC 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	27 9a Sundance Singers 7:30p Anonymous Coffeehouse	28 7p LebFest: Brooks Hubbard
29 10a Worship and Church School	30 5:30p Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	1 7p BSA Troop 279 7p Diaconate	2 5:30p Cub Scout Pack Committee 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	3 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	4 7:30p Classicopia: Great American Songbook	5 8:30a BSA Leader Training 5p UVMC Cello Festival
6 10a Worship and Church School (Communion) 11:15a MSA 12:30p CROP Walk	7 5:30p Cub Scouts (AoL/Girls)	8 7p BSA Troop 279	9 8a-4p NH-WIC 6p UVPRN 7p Bel Canto Chamber Singers	10 7p Choir 7p Valley Improv	11 7:30p Anonymous Coffeehouse	12 3p Student Piano Recital (A. Leary)

If your event is missing or incorrect, please notify us at church@fccleb.org or 603-448-4281.

COMMITTEE NOTES

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

This summer the Board of Governors completed a major clearout of the Sanctuary cellar and other spaces, filling a Casella dumpster with a variety of disused or broken items. Other projects include the prospect of a new exhaust unit for the kitchen, the design and installation of railings for the chancel steps, and softening the thresholds in the hall between the Sanctuary and Parish Hall. On the front of the building, we would like to finish the maintenance and repair of the portico steps and deck, and there remains concern about the cracks and poor condition of the front walk, despite some recent patching and filling.

At the Parsonage, the group is still trying to schedule an energy audit, and it is assessing the condition of the basement dehumidifier. There is also a question of how to proceed with clearing and repairing the sewer line, considering a choice of contractors, types of repair, and total cost. The line will likely have to be dug up and replaced in a year or two.

CHURCH COUNCIL

Barbara Jones reported to Council that the **Diaconate** has not met in July or August but would reconvene on September 3, as they now meet on the first Tuesday of each month. The Deacons continue to monitor communion and Open-Door collections.

For the **Board of Governors**, John Gilliatt appreciated the collective effort in July to clear items from the Sanctuary cellar and other spaces,

filling a rented Casella dumpster. In addition to several who hauled things from the building, John thanked Terry Ellison for his hard work preparing countless old paint cans for disposal. The Board will be addressing insulation plans as well as maintenance of the Parsonage sewer line, another coat of finish on the church's front deck, and the expected installation of a chancel railing this fall. It was also reported that JP Pest Services has begun a treatment plan for mice, ants, and similar issues.

Steve Silver reported on discussions with the new superintendent of our **Church School**, Nan Parsons, who is excited to start the program year on Kick-off Sunday, September 15. The year's theme will explore the characteristics that define being a Christian, rooted in New Testament stories. Nan is eager to solicit input from the children themselves about what they want to study and learn.

Steve also noted that although our **capital campaign** remains in limbo, there are certain individual needs that may have to move up ahead of any broader effort. He will soon be meeting with Jon Scott and Amy Driscoll to discuss this need.

Treasurer Terry Ellison reported that income and expense figures are favorable for this point in the budget year, with no unexpected concerns. Stewardship totals in particular are encouraging, with our most generous season of contributions still to come.

Brian Clancy reported that the fall's **concert schedule** is filling up, with particular mention of the

September Meetings

<i>Diaconate</i>	9/3, 7:00
<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	9/8, 11:15
<i>Christian Education</i>	(TBD)
<i>Church Council</i>	9/17, 7:00
<i>Board of Governors</i>	9/22, 11:15

October Meetings

<i>Diaconate</i>	10/1, 7:00
<i>Mission/Social Action</i>	10/6, 11:15
<i>Christian Education</i>	(TBD)
<i>Church Council</i>	10/15, 7:00
NHCUCC Annual Mtg	10/19
<i>Board of Governors</i>	10/27, 11:15

Anonymous Coffeehouse, which resumes on September 27. The event's organizers hope to have at least one Coffeehouse monthly, but Brian has made it clear that FCC cannot promise any volunteer help on a regular basis.

Brian also noted that this year's Lebanon-area **CROP Walk** would happen on Sunday, October 6. He suggested that we would make our usual plans to host a lunch at FCC following the walk.

Several noted the success of **Musical Drama Camp** and its production of *100 Percent Chance of Rain*, with great thanks to Jo Shelnett, Henry Danaher and several volunteers. All the campers and their families once again enjoyed the experience.

In his **pastor's report**, Steve Silver noted that he has been contacted by the Hope Bible Fellowship in West Lebanon regarding an active-shooter training for area churches,

COMMITTEE NOTES

to be offered by the Lebanon Police Department. Barb Jones, who last year attended a similar workshop in Concord with Steve, expressed her support. All agreed that while we should be careful not to overreact or stir up fears about the prospect of a shooting, this kind of training would be a reasonable precautionary step for Steve and perhaps others in our congregation. Similarly, Steve reiterated intentions for a fire drill during worship this fall, maybe with a minimum of advance notice.

Steve discussed **fall programming** plans, including an Advent study of Paul's letter to the Romans and other new opportunities for adult education. Beyond FCC he looks forward to joining the board of United Church Funds, which now manages a large proportion of our endowment investments. Steve noted the update of our welcome brochure, and there was a general discussion of what we can do to welcome visitors and new members,

including reviving the use of name tags and pew registers and gifts of homemade cookies.

Steve also expressed thanks for his summer vacation time, and he reported that Rachel has been doing well in her interim role at Oberlin, although he added that everyone is clear about its limits. She looks forward to returning to the Upper Valley later this fall.

Lastly, Steve briefly mentioned the recent demonstrations in White River Junction against local ICE enforcement, during which Asma

Elhuni was among several arrested for minor infractions. Although Asma is UVIP Lead Organizer, she joined in the protest as an ordinary citizen. As FCC is an active member of UVIP, Steve wanted us to know of the complex responses to this event, although there was general support of Asma's right to individual expression outside her professional role. All accepted that in promoting the work of UVIP, we will need to anticipate the potential for its activity to reflect on our church, even in indirect (and unfounded) associations such as this.

Would You Like to Participate in Worship?

The Diaconate and Rev. Steve Silver invite greater lay participation in our worship service. Congregation members already sing in our choir and serve as greeters, ushers, and liturgists. Additional possible roles for lay leadership include reading prayers of invocation or dedication, sharing stewardship messages, or even leading children's moments.

No experience or training is required for these important roles!

If you're interested in this opportunity to serve, please speak with a deacon or Rev. Silver, or just contact the church office.



NHC-UCC ANNUAL MEETING 2019

Step Up and Speak Out: From Complicity to Courage

Saturday, October 19, 8:00–4:30 / Registration Now Open

Grappone Conference Center, Concord, NH

All are invited—lay and ordained church leaders, congregation members, friends, and visitors—to attend the 218th Annual Meeting of the NH Conference of the UCC. This year's theme draws from an adaptation of Deuteronomy 31: "Be strong, bold, and courageous as you lead, for God goes with you." The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Traci Blackmon, the UCC's Assoc. Minister of Justice & Local Church Ministries, a lifelong student and advocate of communal resistance to systemic injustice.

Participants will worship together, share communion and fellowship, and address the business of the NH Conference. For complete details and registration, please visit the meeting page on the Conference website (www.nhcucc.org/conference-ministries/2019-annual-meeting).

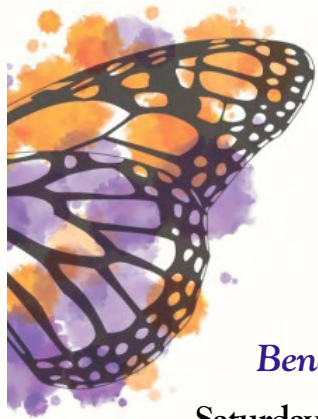
FCC's 2019 Micah Honoree is Marcia Corkins

We join in congratulating **Marcia Corkins**, selected by vote of the congregation to be our UVIP Micah Honoree for this year! We can be proud of the many individuals among our church family to whom this honor might just as easily have been given (eight others received votes this year). Our church offers ample witness to Micah's exhortation to "act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly" with our God.



UVIP Micah Awards Ceremony—Sunday, October 27, 2:00 pm, Claremont, NH

Marcia will be recognized with the other Micah honorees on October 27 at the Claremont Senior Center. This event offers UVIP member groups, and supportive businesses and non-profits, the opportunity to connect and build support for community engagement. FCC has tickets available for anyone who would like to attend—\$30 in advance or \$35 at the door (\$10 in either case for children); proceeds support the vital work of UVIP. Assistance available for anyone wishing to attend; please contact Steve Silver or the church office.



Wings of Hope

10th Annual
Butterfly Release
Benefiting VNH Hospice

Saturday, September 7, 1-3 pm
Colburn Park (Rain Location: FCC)

The Visiting Nurse and Hospice for VT/NH again offers this memorial and benefit event, honoring those who have benefited from hospice care. To participate, you may purchase butterflies to be released for \$20 each, or simply attend as a spectator.

For more information, call 888-300-8853
or visit vnhcare.org/wings-of-hope/.

2019 Lebanon CROP Walk

Sunday, October 6—Register 12:30/Walk 1:00
Lunch Following at FCC

Begun in 1969 as a single walk in Bismarck, ND, the CROP Hunger Walk is now a national project run by Church World Service. CROP Walks across the US raise about \$9 million annually to combat hunger, food insecurity, and poverty worldwide.

YOU can help in one or more of these ways...

Walk!—Participate in the walk itself and get pledges and donations.

Serve!—FCC will again host a post-walk meal, and we need help!

Donate!—Sponsor a walker, or give online at www.cropwalk.org.



www.cropwalk.org

Questions? Contact the church office or visit
www.cropwalk.org.

The Pastoral Perspective, continued from Page 1

Hope. Hope leavened by a hard reality? Sure. But it is hope that undergirds the entire Biblical story. It is hope that shapes our theology. It is the hope of the Christ.

Enjoy the lovely weather. Who knows what's to come? All I can say is that our expectations should be shaped by faith and hope.

Yours faithfully, *Steve*

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION

CONGREGATIONAL RETREAT AT HORTON CENTER

All Are Invited!—Friday to Sunday, September 20-22
UCC HORTON CENTER, WHITE MOUNTAINS

This month we will again join members of the Meriden and Hooksett Congregational Churches—along with our friends from West Lebanon!—for fellowship, recreation, and worship amid the gorgeous natural beauty on Pine Mountain, near Gorham. Although we collaborate with the other churches on some meals and activities, the schedule is completely flexible and open; attending the whole weekend is not required.

Cost is \$30/night (\$25/night for children), including meals; assistance available from the Diaconate.



RSVP TO THE CHURCH OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

To assist in retreat planning, please let us know if you'd like to come, for all or just part of the weekend. Questions welcome—contact the church office.

Don't miss this incredible opportunity to build community and faith amidst God's creation!



WORSHIP WITH WEST LEB. Our annual exchange brought two Sundays of cross-town fellowship, as we shared breakfast and worship with our WLCC friends.

THE LIFE OF OUR CONGREGATION



Musical Drama Camp!

Jo Shelnutt, Henry Danaher, and some daring volunteers shepherded thirteen lively campers through a fun week with *100 Percent Chance of Rain*, the story of Noah's Ark. All enjoyed a pizza dinner together afterward!



MUSIC AT THE MEETINGHOUSE



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

UPCOMING CONCERTS

at First Congregational Church

Acacia Chamber Music—Saturday, September 14, 7:00 pm

Pianist Matthew Odell, flautist Leslie Stroud, and our own “resident clarinetist” Meghan Davis share a lovely program of music by Michel Merlet, Eric Ewazen, Maurice Emmanuel, Clara Schumann, and Camillo Schumann. *Admission TBD; for more, visit www.facebook.com/AcaciaChamberMusic/.*

LebFest 2019 Presents Brooks Hubbard—Saturday, September 28, 7:00 pm

The Lebanon Chamber of Commerce is planning a day-long celebration of our community, which will wrap up with this great concert by the popular Brooks Hubbard. *Concert admission \$10 (LebFest itself is free, offering food, music, and more in Colburn Park, 2:00-7:00); for tickets, visit brookshubbardatlebfest.eventbrite.com.*

Classicopia: The Great American Songbook—Friday, October 4, 7:30 pm (rescheduled from August)

Pianist Dan Weiser and beloved mezzo-soprano Erma Mellinger offer a delightful program of favorites by Irving Berlin, Richard Rodgers, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, and many more. Come enjoy an evening with this engaging pair of musicians! *Adults \$20, FCC members \$15, children free; for more, visit classicopia.org.*

Upper Valley Music Center Cello Festival—Saturday, October 5, 5:00 pm

A celebration of the cello, with UVMC students and faculty. *Details to come; for more, visit uvmusic.org.*

The McKasson/McDonald/McLane Trio—Sunday, October 13, 6:30 pm

Upper Valley Music Center presents this innovative, eclectic, and highly entertaining folk trio, comprised of Ryan McKasson on fiddle, Eric McDonald on guitar and vocals, and Jeremiah McLane on accordion.

Adults \$20, under 18 free; for more, please visit www.mckassonandmcdonald.com.

LOH ON LOCATION: Infinitus—Thursday, November 7, at 7:00 pm

Lebanon Opera House brings us this high-energy, beatboxing string trio from Vancouver, with its incomparable mix of classical repertoire, hip hop, and jazz. Performing both familiar masterworks and original compositions, these classically trained musicians and educators have established themselves among North America’s premier chamber ensembles. Their concert will culminate a four-day residency in Lebanon working with students and faculty at UVMC, who will collaborate on part of the program. *Admission ranges from \$10-23; for tickets and more information, please visit lebanonoperahouse.org/events/infinitus/.*

And returning this fall...The ANONYMOUS COFFEEHOUSE—Fridays, Sept. 27 and Oct. 11, 7:30 pm

FCC is delighted to bring back this exciting venue for live, local music! Conceived as an informal “listening room” for established and emerging musicians, each show features several acoustic acts, and patrons may come and go as they please. Baked goods and non-alcoholic drinks available. And it’s all free of charge, so please come and enjoy! *For more information, please visit anoncoffee.org or email anoncoffeehouse@gmail.com.*

First Congregational Church of Lebanon

Weekly Worship and Church School: Sundays, 10:00 am • Office Hours: Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9-12
10 South Park Street, P.O. Box 230, Lebanon, NH 03766 • 603-448-4281 • church@fccleb.org • www.fccleb.org
Rev. Stephen R. Silver: silver@fccleb.org • Music: music@fccleb.org • Newsletter Submissions: church@fccleb.org



First Congregational Church of Lebanon

10 South Park Street

PO Box 230

Lebanon, NH 03766

DATED MATERIAL

PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

KICK-OFF SUNDAY

September 15

HORTON CENTER RETREAT

UCC HORTON CENTER, WHITE MOUNTAINS

Friday-Sunday, September 20-22

RSVP to the Church Office

2019 CROP Walk

Sunday, October 6

Registration/Walk 12:30

Lunch Following at FCC

Walk! Serve! Donate!

Questions? Contact the church or www.cropwalk.org



Music
at the
Meetinghouse

UPCOMING CONCERTS

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